

September 20, 2009 - \$1 million in Stimulus Money Headed to Fayette

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Fayette County is getting nearly \$1 million in federal economic stimulus money that will be used to make needed road and sewer system repairs at one of its business parks. U.S. Commerce Secretary Gary Locke on Friday announced a \$900,000 Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant to the Fayette Industrial Fund, Georges Township and the Fairchance-Georges Joint Municipal Sewage Authority in Smithfield to make road and water infrastructure improvements to serve the Fayette Business Park in Georges Township.

"That's fantastic news," said Mike Krajovic, president of Fay-Penn Economic Development Council.

"We have been working on that, trying to secure funding to make very urgent repairs to roads in the business park. Some of those roads are over 30 years old and need significant repairs. We have in the past applied for funding through federal EDA and also have put in for support from the state through its infrastructure program," he said.

"I was just speaking to our construction manager who estimated we would have to spend \$10,000 to make emergency repairs to the roads

just to get us through this winter. To me, that's just wasting money.

"But with the stimulus funds, we can do the job right," he said.

He added that the Fayette Industrial Fund will put up matching funds for the grant, although he wasn't sure specifically how much. When reached by telephone Friday, Krajovic said he had not yet heard of the EDA grant approval.

"This is something that has been needed for several years," he said.

Krajovic explained the funds will be spent repairing the roads, taking out a pump station and improving the sewer system, which also will benefit Georges Township and the Fairchance-Georges Joint Municipal Sewage Authority.

He was not sure when the work could begin and doubted it could start before winter.

"We will have paperwork to do to follow up on this and then, with proper bidding procedures, we will have to award contracts and we have to prepare specifications. It may not be possible to get it done this year," he said.

Meanwhile, the project, made possible because of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, is expected to create additional jobs and private investment in the region.

"The Obama administration is committed to creating jobs, encouraging innovation and improving our nation's economic

competitiveness," Locke said.

"This grant will help create new jobs and boost private investment by making the critical infrastructure improvements needed to help boost current and future business development at the Fayette Business Park."

President Barack Obama signed the stimulus package Feb. 17.

Locke said it is providing immediate relief for American families and jump-starting billions of dollars in new projects that are creating jobs, improving infrastructure and strengthening local economies.

"I am pleased to see the stimulus funds at work in Fayette County," U.S. Sen. Arlen Specter, D-Pa., stated in a press release.

"The infrastructure improvements to Fayette Business Park will spur growth and further the public-private effort to create quality employment opportunities in the region."

"These funds will help Fayette County grow by creating jobs and improving infrastructure," said U.S. Sen. Bob Casey. "This is another example of how the recovery act is helping to move our country and our local communities forward."

"With the future completion of the Mon/Fayette Expressway, our region, and in particular the Fayette Business Park, is ripe for further economic growth," U.S. Rep. John P. Murtha, D-Johnstown, stated in the press release announcing the grant. "This funding will put in place the infrastructure needed to attract new businesses and jobs, and is yet another example of federal stimulus funds working in Fayette County."

Locke said the Department of Commerce is a voice for Main Street businesses. It focuses on creating jobs by fostering innovation and opening markets to U.S. products.

EDA is an agency within the U.S. Commerce Department and supports the economic development needs of distressed communities throughout the United States.

Its mission is to lead the federal economic development agenda by promoting innovation and competitiveness and preparing American regions for growth and success in the worldwide economy.

Additional information on how EDA investments are helping distressed communities create a positive and sustainable economic future can be accessed online at www.eda.gov.